

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

ARISE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE; OISTE?;  
NEW ENGLAND STATE-AREA  
CONFERENCE OF THE NAACP; REV.  
TALBERT W. SWAN, II; NORMAN W.  
OLIVER, DARLENE ANDERSON,  
GUMERSINDO GOMEZ; FRANK BUNTIN;  
RAFAEL RODRIQUEZ; and DIANA NURSE,

Plaintiffs,

Civil Action No. 05-30080 MAP

v.

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD and SPRINGFIELD  
ELECTION COMMISSION,

Defendants.

**AFFIDAVIT OF REV. TALBERT W. SWAN**

I, Rev. Talbert W. Swan, hereby certify as follows:

1. I am the Pastor of the Solid Church of God and Christ in Springfield, MA where I have served for the past ten years. I am also the Assistant Director of Northern Educational Services, a non-profit organization in Springfield. I Chair the Springfield Christian Leadership Council and have been a long-time community activist and have served on the NAACP Executive Committee. I am African American and have lived in Springfield for forty years. Because of my positions in the African American community in Springfield, and because of my years living in the City, I am familiar with issues facing the City's minority communities. I frequently discuss such issues with members of those communities and with public officials. I also follow such issues in the press.
2. It is very difficult for candidates of color to raise enough money to run a viable city-wide campaign. Business and other sources of money are reluctant to contribute to campaigns that they think won't win. It is very difficult for candidates of color to get endorsements and positive news coverage from the Springfield newspaper. Springfield is a one newspaper town, and the newspaper can make or break a candidate. Rarely does the newspaper endorse candidates of color, and never first time candidates of color. The newspaper usually endorses only incumbents, and the incumbents are generally white.

3. It is very difficult for African American and Latino candidates to get white people to support and vote for them. It hasn't been possible to win an **at-large** election for City Council or School Committee in Springfield without getting support from the white community. You could get all the minority votes and still not win the election unless you get a significant number of white votes.
4. Many African Americans in Springfield, including my father are from states in the South like Mississippi where there was no opportunity to vote and participate in the electoral system. The African American community does not have the same history of voting as the white community. Only two generations of African Americans have been eligible to vote, whereas whites have been voting and participating in the electoral process for four or five generations. I have seen that this lack of voting history makes it difficult to motivate African Americans to vote, particularly when they feel like they do not have a real choice. They do not feel that the majority of white candidates represent their interests and concerns or will do anything for them.
5. The majority of white elected officials have been unresponsive to the needs and concerns of the minority community. This is particularly true on the issues of ward representation, needle exchange and police brutality, but these are not the only issues.
6. For example, in 1997 the City Council established a sub-committee on Civil Rights and Race Relations. I attended the first meeting and no City Councilors showed up. Yet when the white City Councilors came to a candidates forum in the African American community they boasted about the Civil Rights and Race Relations sub-committee. But in fact no one was ever appointed to head the sub-committee because no City Councilor wanted to chair the committee and the sub-committee never held meetings.
7. In 1996 the Mayor enacted an Executive Order requiring that 25% of the contracts with and services to the City of Springfield be with minority and women-owned businesses. There was supposed to be monthly reporting to determine if this goal was being met. This Order has never been enforced, and the City has not met its goals regarding contracting with minority vendors.
8. Funding from Springfield's Health and Human Services Department and from the Department of Community Development goes disproportionately to white entities. There are clear disparities in funding for minority-based agencies.
9. The African American community sought to have the Mayor appoint a person of color as Director of the Massachusetts Career Development Institute (MCDI) a **major** agency serving the Black community. Instead, Mayor Albano appointed the former white police chief, who had no experience with the minority community and who later was indicted.
10. There is a history of employment discrimination in the City of Springfield, particularly within the police and fire departments and within the school department. Recently it was revealed that Black school principals were being paid less than comparable white

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P. 6

**principals.** There few **been very** little **promotion** of **African Americans** throughout the city, and there are very few supervisory police **officers** and firefighters.

11. There is a **history** of **redlining** in Springfield and a history of **mortgage lending** discrimination by **banks** resulting in lower **homeownership** rates for African Americans and Latinos. This impacts the ability of people of color to accumulate wealth which **would provide** them greater opportunity to **run** for city-wide office.
12. **There** is also **discrimination** in the allocation of resources for **the schools** in Springfield. When the City obtained 90% reimbursement for school **construction** and renovation the money went primarily to **the** white schools. For instance, the Homer School in Mason Square in **an African American neighborhood, was** in **deplorable condition.** Sewage was backing up into the cafeteria; windows were broken and couldn't **be** opened; part of the building was **freezing** and **part** was a sauna - yet instead Of using **state** money to repair **this** school **the** City **allocation** the money to renovate **the** Frederick Harris **School** in **the** white neighborhood of E. Forest **Part**, where six City **Councilors** lived.
13. When the City did build a new school **in** Mason Square, it cut **corners** and did shoddy work, resulting in windows that couldn't **open** and failure to install a **planned** air conditioning **system.** The school was uninhabitable and **students** had to be moved out.
14. In my observation, parents of **color** are **generally** opposed to the new school **boundary** plan which will provide for more neighborhood schools. Many **parents** fear that the **schools** in the white parts of Springfield will get more **resources**, the best **teachers**, and **better equipment** and **supplies.**
15. **Springfield** is supposed to have a Human Relations Committee. I asked the current Mayor to appoint me to the **committee**, but was never appointed. **In** fact the Human Relations Committee has never **met** and is **basically defunct**, another indication of the **City's lack** of concern about race relations and discrimination.

Signed under penalties of perjury, this \_\_\_\_ day of July, 2005.

  
Talbert W. Swan, II